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From: Sheffer, Thomas
Sent: 2017-10-17T14:23:51-04:00
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Subject: Fwd: Over 350 parks retirees bash Zinke review
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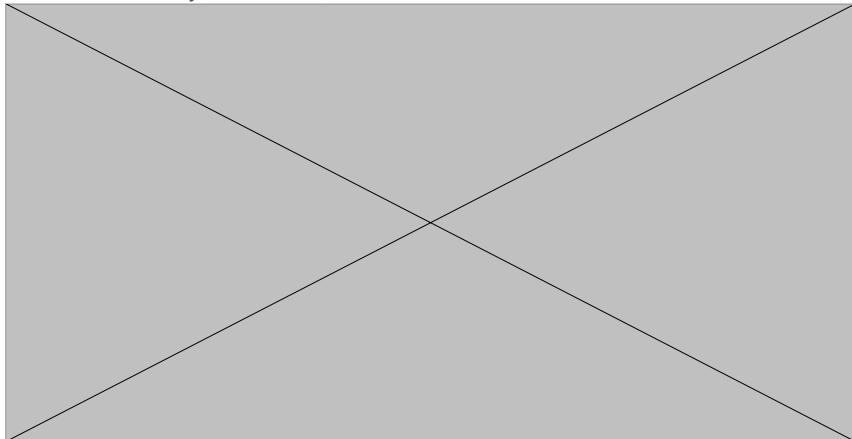
From: Tansey, Thomas <thomas_tansey@nps.gov>
Date: Tue, Oct 17, 2017 at 2:14 PM
Subject: Over 350 parks retirees bash Zinke review
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NATIONAL MONUMENTS

Over 350 parks retirees bash Zinke review

Jennifer Yachnin, E&E News reporter

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Former National Park Service employees sent a letter objecting to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's review of national monuments, including Gold Butte in Nevada. John Fowler/Flickr

More than 350 former National Park Service employees today disparaged Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's recommendations to reduce the acreage of a half-dozen national monuments and alter the management plans of others. They also criticized the agency as "utterly unconscionable" for failing to release a public report following its review of those sites.

In a [letter](#) to Zinke, the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks slammed Zinke's four-month review of more than two dozen monuments, framing it as "antithetical" to the conservation legacy of his self-professed role model, President Theodore Roosevelt.

"This review has clearly been politically motivated and a monumental waste of government time and resources, especially when there are many other urgent issues facing our national parks and other public lands," wrote CPANP Chairwoman Maureen Finnerty and former NPS employees.

President Trump issued an executive order in April mandating a review of all monuments created since 1996 that included more than 100,000 acres.

In a private report to Trump in late August, which was leaked to the media last month, Zinke recommend significant reductions to six sites: the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears national monuments in Utah, Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Oregon and California, Gold Butte National Monument in Nevada, Rose Atoll Marine National Monument and Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument ([Greenwire](#), Sept. 18).

He also suggested management changes at other sites, such as permitting commercial fishing or timber harvesting.

The White House has yet to announce whether Trump will act on Zinke's recommendations, nor has it commented on the leaked report.

The coalition's letter criticized Zinke for not releasing an analysis explaining his recommendations to Trump or other information collected during the review.

"The Interior Department's ongoing failure to release the report or provide supporting documentation for your recommendations to the public is utterly unconscionable given the administration's false allegations about the lack of transparency that occurred during the process that led to the creation of the monuments," the letter says. "All relevant information should be released to the public as soon as possible."

The coalition, whose membership includes current, former and retired NPS employees, also slammed Zinke for his criticism of past uses of the Antiquities Act of 1906. That law allows presidents to set aside public lands as monuments to protect areas of cultural, scientific or historic importance.

"Given the rich history of conservation of public lands under the Antiquities Act of 1906 beginning with President Theodore Roosevelt, your determination that so many portions of existing national monuments do not meet the Act's requirements is unprecedented, arbitrary, and unlikely to withstand legal scrutiny," the letter says.

Opponents of the monuments review, including conservationists and Democratic lawmakers, have argued that the president has no authority to reduce monuments created by one of his predecessors and have vowed to challenge any attempts in federal court.

Republicans note that past presidents have used the Antiquities Act to reduce or alter monument boundaries.

But no president has attempted to do so since President Kennedy modified the Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico in 1963, prior to the adoption of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act in 1976. Moreover, none of those past changes has ever faced a challenge in federal court.

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